

# Vocational Rehabilitation in the Context of Business

Motivation, Management, and Marketing

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In the 32nd Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI; Anderson et al., 2006), vocational rehabilitation (VR) leadership recognized businesses as core customers for the profession. This VR/business relationship has been intimated in theory (Thomas & Berven, 1990) and approximated in practice (Gilbride & Stensrud, 1992; Vandergoot, 1987; Wright, 1980) for years, but has never been so explicitly grounded in a VR vision and plan. Building a practice around business presents a great opportunity for VR. Business leadership networks are emerging in the community that actively recruit workers with disabilities, build networks with community resources, and market their products to customers with disabilities. Appropriately positioned in the marketplace, VR can figure prominently in their strategic plans.

The challenge is to define a new identity for VR in the context of business. If VR desires to reach business as a customer, it must do so in the marketplace. If VR aspires to create evidence-based, added-value services to business, it must have knowledge of business values, structures, and processes (Stensrud, 2007). If VR seeks to deliver on this added value, it must have the market savvy to build and sustain mutually profitable long-term relationships. If VR plans to transform itself in the context of business, it must, to some extent, begin to see itself as a business.

This chapter provides a short primer on principles crucial for the development of VR in the context of business. To this end we will frame the discussion in terms of the marketplace and within the market place consider (a) how the profit motive drives business behavior, (b) how management functions are used to marshal resources to serve the profit motive, and (c) how the concept of marketing has informed and transformed business management.

## Business Motivation in the Marketplace

Maximizing profit and minimizing cost are the fundamental business drivers in a market economy (Drucker, 1982). Businesses generate maximum profit by purchasing materials, equipment, and labor at their lowest cost (McConnell, 1981); employing these commodities in the production of goods or service by the most efficient means possible; and selling the finished products at the highest market price.

Complex and dynamic economic factors introduce uncertainty and risk into every transaction. The purchase prices of commodities and sale prices of products are dependent on demand, supply, and competition. Demand is a function of the motivation and means of an identified group, or market niche, to purchase the product. It is subject to change in the economic fortunes and personal (or organizational) prerogatives of the buyer. Supply is the relative abundance or scarcity of the product. It is subject to the economic fortunes and machinations of the seller. All businesses function in an opportunistic landscape of trade—buying low, selling high. Lucrative markets invariably attract competitors. As competition intensifies, the price point goes down and the profit margin shrinks. Acts of nature, Congress, and global commerce keep the network in flux. Businesses are subject to a kind of economic Darwinism: Those that maximize profit at the expense of their rivals tend to be the ones that survive.

Business values are rooted in the profit motive but mediated by the values of the community. The nature of the business and the directives of management are expressed within the bounds of laws and local custom. The business and the community negotiate the terms of acceptable business practice and mutual benefit (i.e., how “maximizing profit” will be expressed). The business serves the public good by providing products and services, jobs, tax revenue, leadership, and whatever charitable giving it deems worthy. The community provides a workforce, land, customers, and financial incentives as an investment in the relationship. Values mingle at the boundary exchange between business and customer, between corporation and community. The value and meaning of VR within the context of business (a) arise out of expectations of profit and/or cost, (b) are mediated by the community, (c) are expressed through the structures and processes of business, and (d) change according to experience.

Businesses will be motivated to collaborate with VR to the degree that they can expect a profitable return on their investment. There are two possible ways for VR to position itself as a resource in the business/disability market. The most pressing and obvious role (from the business perspective) is in cost containment. However, VR has an expanding opportunity to build partnerships based on expectations of improved productivity and

new sources of revenue. The challenge for the VR profession is to reinvent itself in the context of business through these two value-driven roles.

## VR as Cost Containment Instrument

Because of its direct impact on profit, cost containment is a fundamental business concern. The objective of cost containment is to minimize waste and create the most efficient system possible. In this regard, “work disability” is primarily experienced as a disruption of job performance that connotes decreased productivity and increased cost (Thomason, Burton, & Hyatt, 1998). Total direct and indirect cost of workplace injury and illness has been estimated at \$155.5 billion, or roughly 3% of the total market value of all goods and services produced annually in the United States (Leigh, Markowitz, Fahs, & Landrigan, 2000). This translates to \$9,992 dollars per employee in health and productivity costs (Sarkis, 2000), with muscular-skeletal impairments accounting for the greatest percentage of work disabilities. Back pain costs businesses at least 38% more, on the average, than other work injuries (Baldwin & Johnson, 1998). Compensation claims for work-related distress and depression have been gradually rising (Druss, Rosenheck, & Sledge, 2000) for three decades. Employers pay out over half of the \$80 billion of treatment annually accrued for depressive disorders (Sipkoff, 2006) and absorb an estimated \$51.5 billion in lost productivity, absenteeism, and additional cost associated with increases in waste and accidents (Lerner et al., 2004).

## *Disability Management and VR*

Disability management (DM) is an employer-based response to skyrocketing costs associated with workplace injury and illness that focuses on prevention and management strategies within a coordinated framework of services (Akabas, Gates, & Galvin, 1992). DM is a dramatic departure from traditional worker compensation models in that the problem of work-related injuries does not begin or end with the residual loss of function. Work-related injuries are “work disruptions” that require an organizational response (Millington & Strauser, 1998). In DM, the workplace is the therapeutic environment of choice, rehabilitation services are implemented early and aggressively, and return-to-work policies and procedures are clear (Shrey, 2006). DM has generated significant savings in workplace disability costs (Harder & Scott, 2005).

VR professionals can play a major role within the disability management approach, providing proactive interventions at individual and environmental levels as part of interdisciplinary teams made up of internal

(human resource) and external professionals. Skills in case management, counseling, job analysis, workplace accommodations, and placement enable VR professionals to become valuable members of the disability management team. In addition, they are in an ideal position to capitalize on the possibility that employers with disability management programs may also be more willing to hire people with disabilities (Habeck & Hunt, 1999).

#### *VR as ADA Consultation*

Disability in the workplace can also conjure business litigation fears. It is perhaps surprising to learn that of the 595 cases filed against employers under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, 1990) between 1992 and 1997, only 2.7% of the cases resulted in findings of discrimination on the part of the employer. In the balance of the cases, 48% found no discrimination, with the remaining cases being settled out of court. This may speak less to the issue of discrimination than to who is using the law (the majority of cases have been filed by people who were already employed and who acquired disabilities in midlife) and the way in which the law is being used. Nevertheless, the cost to employers in these cases (excluding legal expenses incurred) was in the neighborhood of \$150.5 million, with \$1.659 million being the largest single ADA settlement awarded (Aronson, 2000). The spectre of disability litigation can be fearsome indeed.

Spectre or not, businesses are extremely motivated to comply with the law (Schair, 2000) and avoid the courtroom. Employers in general are interested in information on accommodations, and small businesses in particular are greatly in need of ADA training (Bruyère, Erickson, & VanLooy, 2006). VR professionals are ideally positioned to provide training where needed and technical assistance on demand.

#### *VR as Profit Center*

Profit hinges on the productivity of the workforce. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the U.S. manufacturing industry as it struggles to regain market share after decades of outsourcing. The quality of the traditional workforce has diminished, the nature of entry-level jobs has shifted from unskilled to skilled, and demand is increasing (Eisen, Jasinowski, & Kleinert, 2005). Shortages in skilled employment create a seller's market that leads to wage inflation (Manpower, 2006) in industries that are already struggling with profitability. Employers have begun to actively recruit from nontraditional sources of labor (such as workers with disabilities) to fill the gap.

Other industries are seeking nontraditional sources of labor for more proactive reasons. Organizations have recognized the potential benefits of recruiting a diverse workforce, including the following: Competitive

advantage is improved (Bassett-Jones, 2005), a diverse marketplace can be serviced (Kleiman, 2005), diverse talent is harnessed, different perspectives and technological innovations are made available (Bagshaw, 2004), customer service is improved, strategic insight is enhanced (Kurlander, Fargo, & Kurlander, 2004), and skills shortages can be addressed (Teicher, 2003). Diversity management has become a systematic and scientific management strategy for building an inclusive workforce (Thomas, 1991). A survey of 100 of the top Fortune 500 companies found that 42% of those with diversity policies explicitly mentioned people with disabilities, while a further 47% described diversity in a manner that could include this population (Ball, Monaco, Scmeling, Schartz, & Blanck, 2005).

The growing demand for new labor markets is a market opportunity for VR. To compete for market share, the case must be made that workers with disabilities, properly accommodated, are as productive as their nondisabled counterparts. VR professionals understand this message, but it is not sufficient to attract business as a customer. The misperception is in the product being bought and sold: VR is not selling workers with disabilities, VR is selling productivity. The measure of its ability to deliver a productive workforce is not in the individual placement but in the benefit of VR resources to the organization as a whole. For example, we can point to the productivity of a "supported" worker as a direct benefit, but we must also consider the impact of this worker on others as potential added value. Did the supported employment intervention improve group cohesion among coworkers? Does the placed worker positively affect morale? Can the training technique (systematic instruction; Callahan & Garner, 1997) be used by the business in other situations? VR's potential impact on productivity should be thought of as systemic, and service offerings should be designed with this broader view in mind.

#### *VR as Access to New Customers*

As a market niche with an estimated \$220 billion in discretionary income at their disposal, the disability community commands the attention of many businesses (Jones, 2000). Travelers with disabilities spend \$13.6 billion per year on related expenses despite access problems (Open Door Organization, 2005). Accommodating customers with disabilities has become a marketing strategy rather than a compliance issue. ATM machines (Ammenheuser, 2000), photocopiers (Polk, 2000), Web sites (Zielinski, 2000), taxicabs (Malkine, 2008), and accessible sporting gear from sailboats to snow skis are specifically targeting customers with disabilities.

The added value of VR lies in its social and business networks. There is no profession better positioned as a liaison between business and this increasingly desirable market than VR. VR professionals can move in disability community circles suggesting disability-friendly businesses; they

can consult with business on how to improve image and accessibility; they can orchestrate public events that bring the two communities together in shared enterprise. This is pocketbook advocacy—not a role and function we commonly associate with VR, but a potent source of value to business nonetheless.

## Management in the Marketplace

Management provides the structure and processes through which business pursues profit. Every VR contact with business is legitimated through management, and every function of management has a potential implication for VR contact. The management of human resources is the primary interface for VR (Pransky, 2000) and thus will provide the context for describing the functions of management (Drucker, 1982): staffing, planning, organizing, controlling, and directing.

### Staffing

Staffing is unique to the management of human resources. Staffing is the management of worker movement into and within the company, facilitated through selection, training and development, and support processes (R. Smith, 1983). This is the function most closely associated with the "employer" role in a business organization. The employer is not a person, per se, but a representative of the business to whom the authority and responsibility of making employment decisions has been delegated. The employer can be the CEO, owner-operator, department head, supervisor, or even foreman, depending on the employment issue at hand. VR professionals may interface with any of these "employers," addressing each according to her or his unique perspective on human resource management.

### *Employee Selection*

Employee selection is a stepwise process of recruitment, screening, and hiring designed to efficiently acquire the best worker for the job. The objective of recruitment is to attract a sufficiently large and talented applicant pool. Strategies use various combinations of internal posting, external advertising, public events, professional recruiters, and informal word of mouth, depending on the job and the target market (Arthur, 1991). Good recruitment (a) reaches the target market and (b) provides enough job information for individuals to make informed decisions about applying (Wanous, 1980). The objective of screening is to remove undesirable

candidates from the applicant pool via the most efficient means possible. Employers scan applications for "red flags" (Barron & Bishop, 1985; Granovetter, 1984), such as insufficient experience or credentials, job hopping, absenteeism, tardiness, gaps in employment history, reasons for leaving past employment, and past wage rates (Bills, 1990). The objective of hiring is to identify the best match for the position based on some construction of positively weighted criteria. Negotiating compensation concludes the hiring process.

Screening and hiring processes use interviews (Robertson, Gratton, & Rout, 1990), biographical data reviews (Rothstein, Schmidt, Erwin, Owens, & Sparks, 1990), employment tests, personality assessments (Day & Silverman, 1989), and work samples (Hattrup & Schmitt, 1990) to gather decision-making information. Methods of assessment must be unbiased to be legal and must have predictive validity to be useful. Organizational research into selection methods has advanced the "point-to-point" validation theory (Asher & Sciarrino, 1974) as a unifying framework for criterion validation across selection methods. The literature suggests that all selection methods, properly administrated and designed, have the potential for providing predictive validity to the selection process (M. Smith & George, 1994).

However, researchers confront a disturbing discrepancy between academic findings and actual practice (Dakin & Armstrong, 1989). More often than not, untrained employers hire on the basis of a casual, unstructured interview. Personality tests and work samples are purchased and used with no defensible correlation with the job. Pseudoscientific selection practice is devoid of real utility, needlessly expensive, and potentially litigious (Raju, Burke, & Normand, 1990), and yet they prevail.

### *Employee Orientation, Training, and Development*

Management is responsible for formally socializing new workers, as well as improving their productivity and exploiting their talents in new job assignments. Orientation facilitates the new workers' arrival. The purpose of orientation is to reduce unnecessary cost (start-up, turnover, amount of supervision) and to provide a smooth transition by reducing employee anxiety and suppressing hazing activities (Bedian, 1989). Formal orientation programs are more common in large organizations, but, formal or not, orientation exposes the new worker to the company philosophy, history, culture, processes, and personnel.

Training develops an employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities for the purpose of improving present and future work performance (Bedian, 1989). Training improves productivity, increases quality, reduces waste, and minimizes accidents. Basic skills training teaches remedial language, math, and problem-solving skills as a foundation for advanced job-specific skills (Szabo, 1990). Job-specific skills are taught through on-the-job

training, job rotation, coaching (Knippen & Green, 1990), mentoring, and apprenticeship (Hanley-Maxwell & Millington, 1992). A growing disparity between the skill demands of existing jobs and the academic preparedness of new workers has increased management investment in training (Haas, 1993).

Development links career development to the organization's predicted HR needs by identifying, grooming, and exploiting in-house talent (Sartain & Baker, 1978). Employee self-assessment tools available through in-house career planning workshops, workbooks, or software help the motivated employee to self-select into development efforts. Employees may also seek help from contracted career counselors or begin career discussions directly with human resource management staff. Management may also employ assessment centers to select from internal recruits and maintain internal labor market information exchanges and job-matching systems through job posting, skills audits or inventories, and replacement or succession planning (Gutteridge, 1986).

### *Employee Support*

Pressures, demands, and conflicts within the workplace (Davis, 1991) as well as problems outside the workplace can affect worker productivity. For many employers, the costs of employee selection, training, and development are high enough to make employee attrition (literally through leaving the company or figuratively through poor job performance) a serious economic concern. Support services prevent or correct barriers to employees' optimal production.

Employment assistance programs (EAPs) traditionally deal with issues of alcohol abuse but have subsumed the gamut of behavior-medical problems that cause work disruption (Roman, 1988), including psychiatric problems, family issues, and drug dependence. EAP goals include reducing absenteeism and turnover, and the related costs (including to morale); increasing productivity; removing management involvement in counseling; and providing due process for problematic employees. Services are usually coordinated in-house, with referrals to appropriate professionals in the community.

Wellness programs were created to curb health costs (Blanchard & Tager, 1985), and they succeed where less integrated health promotion programs have failed. Wellness programs create awareness of pertinent health issues through health risk assessments of personnel and family members. Counseling, in-service, and educational materials are used to inform employees of health risks and how to avoid them. Programs are customized and cover such topics as physical fitness, nutritional counseling, stress management, smoking cessation, weight loss, cardiovascular fitness, blood pressure screening, prenatal care, and injury prevention.

### *VR and Staffing*

Staffing is the employer's gatekeeping function, and this overview reveals that there are many gates to be kept. Recruitment, screening, and hiring are the job-acquisition gates. Orientation and training are the job-keeping gates. Development is the career-advancement gate. Workers with disabilities may find barriers at each (O'Hara, 2004; Roessler, Neath, McMahon, & Rumrill, 2007).

VR services must ensure that job seekers receive recruitment information that alerts them to job openings and allows them to select into applicant pools. Screening needs to be disability sensitive so as not to remove candidates with disabilities as "false positives" when accommodation removes the barrier. The full value of the accommodated worker must be expressed in hiring so employers can fairly rank the applicant.

Orientation is an opportunity for the employer not only to socialize the new worker but also to raise disability awareness among coworkers and orient them to a new experience. We ignore coworkers at the peril of the new employee, for they also have a say in who is ultimately selected for the job (Schein, 1992). Inclusion in training is a prerequisite for tenure, but for workers with disabilities inclusion in the physical sense may be insufficient (B. Smith, Povall, & Floyd, 1991). Where current training methods do not facilitate improved performance for workers with disabilities, alternative methods must be developed. Because of the unique challenges of disability in the workplace, managers may need to be proactive about the career development of such workers. Steps may need to be taken to ensure that workers with disabilities are aware of opportunities for advancement and are encouraged to compete. Gatekeeping is not a capricious activity; management is looking for added value. If workers with disabilities are not well employed in business, it may be that management lacks the vision to see their value or may lack the skill to harness it. These are organizational disabilities that the VR profession must also accommodate.

Staffing is the most critical management function to VR practitioners: If human resource management is the interface between VR services and business, then staffing defines the primary point of intervention.

### *Planning*

Two considerations in this management function need to be differentiated: planning and the plan. Planning precedes all intentional activities of business, including the other management functions (Bedian, 1989). Any attempt to adapt or improve the processes or structures of business includes some level of formal planning that involves "the explicit evaluation of alternative courses of action, selection of one of the alternatives

for execution, and formal communication of the decision to interested persons throughout the organization" (Emery, 1969, p. 108).

Planning moves from the top down. The goals of planning become more specific and concrete as they are operationalized through a hierarchy of subgoals. High-level planning tends to be global in its expected outcomes, more long-term, and strategic (Child, 1972; Mintzberg, 1988) in its implementation. These global outcomes are the synthesis of the subgoals of the next level of management down, which pertain to more specific, tactical, and time-limited goals. These goals, in turn, are further subdivided into increasingly specific goals, until the planning process reaches the workers who produce and the consumers who buy the business product.

Planning may be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending on who has the authority to make plans (Vroom & Yetton, 1973), how information is used (Koopman & Pool, 1994), and how formalized and complex the planning process is (Hickson, Butler, Cray, Mallory, & Wilson, 1986). Planning can vary in terms of the centralization of planning authority, the amount and type of information gathered and used, and the level of formalization. Any combination of these qualities can describe a planning process, from the high-centralization, high-information, and high-formality approach of bureaucracies to planning as "organized chaos" (Koopman & Pool, 1994). It also is possible that one might find different planning approaches at work at different levels in a planning hierarchy.

Plans are the output of the planning process. The purpose of a formal plan is to bring about the instrumental behaviors that will lead to one or more predetermined outcomes. Each set of subgoals requires a plan to achieve them. Thus, any one plan in an organization should describe actions to be taken, quantify expected outcomes, and allow for communication and coordination across a network that constitutes the global strategy of the business. Standing plans dictate the day-to-day activities of an organization and are formalized in the policies, rules, and regulations of the work unit. This allows management to dictate behavior to lower level management and workers economically in routine or high-volume activities. Single-use plans are implemented in nonroutine situations or when insufficient information exists to create a standing plan. A plan may be specific in its procedural instructions, leaving little room for the discretion of the worker, or it may be a simple declaration of a desired outcome, leaving the means of achieving it up to the worker.

### *VR and Planning*

The hierarchical nature of plans suggests possible interventions for VR at every step, from executive vision to the standing plan. Unfortunately, there is little in the way of infrastructure to provide access to the higher echelons. At present, VR is better suited to address disability issues in the

standing plans of local businesses. Expertise in ADA (Bruyère et al., 2006), OSHA (Haynes, Black, & Shackelford, 2007), and Worker Compensation are potential resources for businesses engaged in policy review.

### *Organizing*

Managers structure and coordinate their resources to expedite plans. Managers group workers in meaningful patterns, specify worker responsibilities and authorities, and establish formal lines of communication between groups and individuals (Sartain & Baker, 1978) on the basis of the dictates of the strategic plan of the organization (Chandler, 1981). Form attempts to follow function in organizing endeavors (Hrebiniak & Joyce, 1985). Productive efficiency is the goal, but approaches to efficient organization differ.

We can first think of organization at the unit level. There are three approaches (Jelinek, Litterer, & Miles, 1981). The *hierarchical* approach to organizing breaks down large tasks into smaller and smaller component parts based on similarities. The *work flow* approach organizes units on the basis of where they fit in the production cycle, rather than on the similarities of jobs. Autonomous work groups, the third approach, create units based on the interdependency of workers needed to complete a large task. Each approach has a different logic and results in a different structure overall. The degree of hierarchical control diminishes and intrinsic motivation increases as each approach is considered in turn.

Values of the business are reflected in organizing, as well. Businesses that emphasize "human relations" will create structure that builds cohesion and morale among workers. Where organizational growth is key, business will stress innovation and opportunistic readiness in a flexible organizational structure. Productivity is a basic business value incorporated into structure by planning and goal setting. Businesses that value predictability and stability tend to emphasize information management and communication (Bedian, 1994). These approaches are thematic and not mutually exclusive. Good organizing often requires a blending of values.

Organizing at its most specific is job design. There are three basic approaches to job design: specialization, time and motion, and job enrichment. Specialization breaks large, complex tasks into increasingly smaller components, creating simpler jobs with fewer tasks repeated with greater frequency. Time and motion studies increase the efficiency of task procedures and develop objective standards for performance appraisal. Together, these approaches allow management to centralize authority over planning and control functions, increase productivity efficiency and thus profitability, and create a more equitable means to compensate workers

based on output (Taylor, 1911). These "scientific" management methods have been vastly popular, if problematic, in business. They tend to disregard the human element of productivity, and they have unintended social (e.g., worker alienation), psychological (e.g., worker dissatisfaction), and physical (e.g., repetitive motion injury) costs that threaten long-run profitability. The overspecialization of work and loss of autonomy have created monotonous jobs with little intrinsic reward. Time and motion studies have created, rather than ameliorated, alienation of workers from management. Job enlargement and job rotation are sometimes considered as alternatives but have little impact on the basic problems of specialization. Job enrichment reverses the trends of work specialization and time-motion study by enlarging the job around a natural work cycle, increasing worker control over process, and providing new lines of communication (i.e., feedback) between employers and workers as well as workers and consumers (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The objective of all job design is economic efficiency in production (Jelinek et al., 1981). The challenge for business is to find a balance between the science and the human in organizing.

### *VR and Organizing*

Job accommodation is a direct application of VR service to the organizing function of management. The most common tactic taken to convince employers of the value of job accommodations is to emphasize their relatively low cost and suggest a heretofore unrecognized return on investment in a productive worker with a disability. The focus on disability obscures the fact that employers have always adapted jobs to fit the workforce. VR expertise in job analysis and design can bring greater flexibility, safety, and productivity to all jobs, while simultaneously creating a more accessible workplace for future clients.

### *Controlling*

The control function of management serves the plan by (a) evaluating planned behavior against process and product standards (Sartain & Baker, 1978) and (b) providing the means to correcting unsatisfactory behavior and rewarding satisfactory behavior at the group or individual level. The unit goals defined in the plan provide the basis for evaluation at each level. Goals are interpreted in terms of one or more performance indicators, and the actual unit performance is compared against these benchmarks. Control is exercised at the individual level through the use of performance appraisals. Performance appraisals are generally provided by the employee's

supervisor and are used to make staffing decisions concerning salary, promotion, training, reassignment, retention, termination, layoffs, disciplinary actions, and so forth (Donaldson & Scannell, 1987).

Five potential types of objective measures are included in performance appraisals (Fisher, Schoenfeldt, & Shaw, 1999). Production measures compare quantities of output directly. This measure is most appropriate when production is repetitive, an average can be computed, and external factors do not impede the employee's ability to produce. A measure of dollar sales is most appropriate for sales jobs, but care must be taken to adjust for the quality of the territories (e.g., rural vs. urban). Personnel data (e.g., absenteeism, reprimands, accidents) may figure into evaluation as long as a clear relationship between personnel data and job effectiveness is identified. Performance tests are used when procedures are tightly prescribed (e.g., fighter pilots, telephone sales representatives). Managers are evaluated on business unit performance indicators, such as return on equity, profit margin, and market share. When comparing manager performance, evaluations should make allowance for economic factors.

Performance appraisal is subject to the same legal standards that protect workers from discrimination in employment selection. A good and safe performance appraisal is based on a job analysis and should be able to demonstrate that the content is job related, comprehensive, and free of extraneous variables. The criteria should be as objective and concise as possible. The scoring and rating processes should be standardized, universally applied, and based on direct observation.

### *VR and Controlling*

Performance appraisals are the employer's control mechanism. Because they are used to make employment decisions, it is imperative that workers with disabilities have access to regularly scheduled performance appraisals and that the administration and interpretation of the performance appraisals be valid for workers with disabilities. It is also through the worker's performance appraisals that the quality of VR services can be evaluated. In establishing a working relationship with employers, the use of program evaluations may be helpful for improving services and accountability to the employer.

### *Directing*

It is not enough for a worker to have the skills to do the job if he or she is not properly motivated to be productive. The underachieving worker is a hidden cost that is potentially more harmful than absenteeism (Harnett,

2000) because the lack of commitment to production has a negative impact on individual and group performance. Management is challenged with shaping or directing employee behavior through motivational methods.

Business's preferred means of motivating individuals is incentive pay. Business understands its workforce as a meritocracy managed by the human resource department. Here, individuals in the workforce are compensated relative to their ranking, which is based on performance appraisal outcomes. This is an effective way to increase motivation to an extent, but incentive pay is reduced in its effectiveness by individual differences (not all workers are motivated by money), particular characteristics of the organization (e.g., workplace cultural norms, policies that reward compliance over innovation), how workers perceive the management of incentive pay (fairness), and the human resource department's actual proficiency at implementing an incentive pay scheme.

Worker motivation has many roots. Individual differences, such as personal values, interests, and cognitive choice (Deci & Ryan, 1980), are largely beyond the direct influence of management. So employers tend to deal with "proximal" factors (Kanfer, 1994) that are more closely associated with the work behavior. Employees respond positively to fair and equitable treatment, including participating in decision making and being informed of the reasons for policy decisions (Greenberg, 1982; Kanfer, Sawyer, Earley, & Lind, 1987). Goal setting, properly matched to the situation, facilitates greater productivity (Ross, 1985). Specific and appropriately challenging goals (Campbell & Ilgen, 1976) direct worker attention, initiate and sustain on-task behaviors, and engage the worker in strategic development (Locke, Shaw, Saari, & Latham, 1981). Feedback sustains motivation and has the ability to increase productivity and decrease absenteeism when linked with self-management (Latham & Frayne, 1989).

Leadership is the most ephemeral of management responsibilities. It is clear that supervisor behavior has a profound impact on worker performance and satisfaction, but there is no unifying theory of leadership to explain what is obviously a very complex dynamic. Instead, a loose confederation of theories has generated a patchwork of findings that view leadership from a variety of perspectives (Fiedler & House, 1994).

Attribution theory illustrates how labels can change workers' evaluations of their supervisors (Foti, Fraser, & Lord, 1982). Cognitive resource theory (Fiedler, 1986) suggests that intelligent leaders are not always the best leaders. The contingency model (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987) suggests that a match between the supervisor and types of group motivation employed (task motivation vs. relationship motivation) is important. Charismatic and transformational theories suggest that leaders who communicate a vision and sense of mission to subordinates can positively influence worker performance and satisfaction. Path-goal theory suggests that effective

leaders make the personal goals of the worker contingent on productivity goals (House, 1971). Personality theories suggest that a healthy need for social power is beneficial, but a self-serving need for personal power is counterproductive (McClelland & Burnham, 1979). All of these theories have garnered some level of validity and utility over time, but when considered as a group they suggest that leadership is as much an art as a science.

### *VR and Directing*

Leadership is a matter of personal style. The best leaders foster acceptance in the workplace for workers with disabilities. There are different ways this can be accomplished at different levels of leadership. Supervisors lead for production. They set achievable goals and help create an environment where goals can be met. They lead by equitable treatment and valuing the team. Upper management can lead by making employment of workers with disabilities part of the strategic plan and the values of the organization. Among their peers in the business community, business leaders can lead by example. Having implemented plans to hire large numbers of workers with disabilities, they share their success and values with others. Having influence on their own vendors, business leaders can leverage others to do the same.

## Market-Driven Management

To this point, we have discussed the market context and the management structures of business. In this section, we will discuss marketing as the process that brings market and business together. Broadly speaking, marketing can be defined as any action in the marketplace taken by an individual or organization that is instrumental in creating an exchange relationship with another individual or organization (Holloway & Hancock, 1968). Buying and selling is the exchange—maximum profitability is the goal. Marketing defines the relationship between buyers and sellers and the meaning of maximum profitability.

The idea of marketing evolved as markets became more diverse and competitive. Until the 1950s, marketing was product oriented; the function was to stimulate consumer demand for existing products. The emphases were on advertising and sales. Marketing plans favored sales campaigns. The goal of business was increased sales volume. Marketing was limited in scope and relatively separate from the other business functions.

Marketing took on new meaning in the postwar years, when markets, and babies, boomed. Businesses began shifting the focus of marketing from the product to the consumer. The emphases of marketing broadened



to include research and development, engineering, and production. The goal of business became profitability through marketing. Marketing became a strategy for marshalling resources across business functions, rather than a function itself. It became a philosophy of business rather than an adjunct of sales (Webster, 1994). Marketing and innovation thus became part of the strategic plan (Drucker, 1982). Through marketing (Sandhusen, 1987), management (a) gathers, analyzes, and disseminates market-based information concerning current product status and future trends in the market, as well as an accounting of internal strengths and weaknesses that mediate the business's abilities to capitalize on those market trends; (b) identifies opportunities for the expansion of market share and threats against the stability of current market share; (c) strategically plans for the proactive and reactive exploitation of market opportunities and defense against market threats through changes in the target markets, product offers, and structure of business; and (d) administers a system of controls to measure and report the effect of marketing efforts on the established organizational goals, and to adjust strategy accordingly.

### The Role of Innovation

As part of the strategic business plan, marketing is change management. It demands innovation as a response to customer feedback. Innovation is any change in business designed to, at least, maintain market share and, ideally, expand it. Innovation may mean a change in target markets. Business can expand market share by increasing the market penetration of current target markets, adding new target markets, or shifting marketing efforts from one target market to another.

Marketing innovations can change the "offer" the business makes to its target markets. There are four components to the offer (Sandhusen, 1987): product, product price, product place, and product promotion. Management can manipulate these qualities to improve the desirability of the offer. Product innovations create new products and improve existing ones. Price innovations change the nature of purchase by adjusting price or by creating new financing arrangements. Place innovations change the where, when, and how of product delivery to customers. Indirect and direct promotion innovations change communication strategies for attracting customers. Indirect promotion is aimed at the market niche in a general way, as in public relations events and most advertising. Direct promotion is aimed at a specific consumer and involves changes in the way a sale is initiated, negotiated, and closed; it also involves maintaining customer satisfaction. Growth strategies are based on innovations in the target markets, the offer, or both (Webster, 1994).

Marketing has spurred innovation at a structural level in management. A marketing philosophy of business asserts that "structure follows strategy" (Webster, 1994): As markets and products change according to consumer value, so should the organization pursue continuous improvement of internal structures, processes, and resources (Walton, 1988). Marketing drives business planning and organizing by altering how decisions are made. There are three types of management decisions. Operational decisions dictate the allocation of resources within the organization. Administrative decisions dictate the process and physical structure of the organization. Strategic decisions are focused on the relationship between the business and the marketplace (i.e., what products to sell and what markets to enter). Businesses without a strong marketing foundation traditionally address problems of profitability operationally by changing the allocation of resources within the organization. If this fails, they implement administrative change by altering business process and structure. As a matter of last resort, they turn to strategic methods that consult consumers in their search for profit. Market-driven management reverses the order of decision making by anchoring plans in consumer research. Administrative and operational decisions follow. Thus, the structure and processes of production are subject to change to meet the needs of consumers.

Deming (1982) was the first major proponent of a market-driven approach to management. He developed a method of strategic internal innovation built on the idea of scientific management by introducing small-sample statistics to quality control. His method of continuous quality improvement was customer driven and controlled by a mutual commitment of workers and management. The Deming approach linked the structures of business to market innovation. This new market-driven management thinking has made inroads in the rehabilitation field (see Finitzo & Grosse, 2003) and spawned other models that view systematic change as a natural organizational function (see George & Weimerskirch, 1994).

### Marketing Implications for Vocational Rehabilitation

Marketing as a concept has influenced VR practice (Corthell & Boone, 1982; Fabian, Luecking, & Tilson, 1994) for years, but it remains to be fully integrated into the fabric of management. The term has traditionally been used in the rehabilitation literature in the vernacular sense as a synonym for "advertising" or "sales," with little awareness of its grounding in management or its strategic implications. In this limited sense, marketing does not have the capacity to create meaningful change. As an approach to management it is transformative. As VR moves into the context of business, it too will be transformed.

This transformation, if it is to occur, will arise from customer demand. Recently, corporate leaders from Microsoft, IBM, McDonald's, Disney, Walmart, and J.P. Morgan Chase, among others collaborated with Department of Education (Rehabilitation Services Administration [RSA], Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services [OSER]), the Department of Labor (Office of Disability Employment Policy [ODEP]), and the Assistive Technology Industry Association to lay out a strategic road map for improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities (Assistive Technology Industry Association & U.S. Business Leadership Network, 2007). They made their needs explicit and in doing so revealed the need for a business response from the VR profession. Businesses want to see people with disabilities demonstrating their market potential. They call upon agencies to understand the motivation, language, and realities of business and respond accordingly. They desire functional networks that link them with the disability community and navigators to help them access and exploit the tangle of federal programs. They need dependable information resources that will keep them compliant with the law and abreast of evidence-based practice. They need access to expertise to facilitate strategic plans and procurement decisions. They need meaningful data that demonstrate return on their VR investment. These are the forces of the demand-side market that will shape the VR profession in the future.

In response to the demands of business, VR will need to consider the place of marketing beyond the human resource interface. Embracing the corporate customer, the VR profession must expand the scope of its business outreach from local strategies like affirmative businesses (e.g., Easterly & McCallion, 2007; Krupa, Lagarde, & Carmichael, 2003) and placement service consortiums (Gilbride, Mitus, Coughlin, & Scott, 2007) to regional and national strategies. The 32nd IRI, "The VR-Business Network: Charting Your Course" (Anderson et al., 2006), aspires to nothing less than a unitary corporate identity for the VR profession. The plan is to organize the 80 distinct state VR agencies into a virtual corporation, that is, a "one company" VR-business network with a single point of contact at state, regional, and national levels. The framework described in the IRI embraces the language of business, a customer and market focus, leadership commitment to results, a strategic marketing plan that drives the development of services and structures, continuous quality improvement, and results-oriented process management. Multilevel collaboration with business could provide a context for the development of innovative and evidence-based practice for direct service, programmatic, and policy interventions. The linkages across levels could provide local programs with national benchmarks (see Cenicerros, 2004) and a network of technical assistance for program development. The national network could provide

VR with a means of discourse with national and multinational corporations currently unavailable to the profession.

## Conclusion

Marketing philosophy is making inroads into VR service and management. We begin to understand that the profession is not divorced from the context of business, but in fact is fully engaged in it. There is a bottom line for VR, and it is employment outcomes. Minimal success (Berkowitz, 1988; D. L. Smith, 2007) in raising chronically low employment numbers for workers with disabilities (Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics, 2007) is no longer sufficient to justify the investment of federal money in VR; the public demands more productive models and expanded labor market share for people with disabilities.

There are two paths to consider in the application of the business principles outlined in this chapter. The first path leads to new products designed especially for business. Marketing requires the death of the antithetical "beg-place-pray" approach to placement (Fabian et al., 1994). Innovation in this regard will arise out of a working relationship with human resource management as the primary contact, but with connections at every management function and with influence on labor as well as customer markets. The second path leads to new structures for the profession. Market-driven management reveals that serving business as a customer requires VR to think and act like a business. There is a great deal that VR can learn from modern business management, but it remains to be seen what this internal innovation will look like. Because, in the end, the fundamental mission of VR will always be full community inclusion of people with disabilities, not maximizing profit. VR will be transformed in the context of business, but its heart must remain unchanged. This may be the greatest value VR ultimately brings to its business partners.

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